AUGUSTE COMTE
MEMORIAL TRUST LECTURE 10

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by

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THE IDEA OF A SPIRITUAL POWER

I

ACCORDING to the medieval theory, which Comte accepted and adapted, there are two principal powers or authorities in human society, the spiritual and the temporal. These differ both in their spheres and in their modes of operation. The temporal power is concerned with war and with work, with men's bodies and their welfare, with their happiness here on earth. Its sphere is that in which politics and business are pursued. In medieval times its authorities were feudal lords, kings and emperors, whose activities were regulated by custom and by law and supported by secular judges and, ultimately, by the sword of justice, the *judicium sanguinis*. According to Comte, the temporal authorities of modern times are the captains of industry and men of business who organize bodies of men, not for war or violence, but for concerted assaults upon nature, with the object of converting it to human purposes. These new temporal authorities uphold their position by agreements with their workmen and by their ability thereby to provide the community with what it needs. At one time Comte suggested using the term *capacité* rather than *pouvoir* for this industrial control and expertise, on the ground, it seems, that knowledge and organization are replacing power and authority. The spiritual power, on the other hand, was in medieval times concerned with the salvation of men's souls. It was said to be the *causa temporalis*, that for which the temporal exists, just as the soul is that for which the body exists. Within this sphere force and commerce are not in place. Forgiveness of sins comes from repentance, and repentance through the ministering offices of the Church rather than by purchase or coercion. Comte thought that in modern times the spiritual power is the authority exercised over opinion by men of science, literary men and artists. He thought too that

it would eventually have to be organized in ways analogous to those of the medieval church, but with positive science replacing theology, and a philosophy of history, indeed, a science of history developed from sociology and philosophy, replacing revelation. Like the medieval Papacy and clergy as conceived by Pope Gregory VII and his successors, it would be independent of the temporal power. It would not endeavour to coerce belief and opinion, but would support and communicate its doctrines by proof and demonstration. Its functions would be 'consultative and preparatory' rather than executive. Its scientific demonstrations would make it difficult though not impossible for the temporal power to reject its advice, and it would play an essential part in maintaining that consonance of beliefs and feelings without which society would disintegrate into warring factions.[1]

In the light of all this, it is interesting to notice that at a time when Catholic religious beliefs were being revived after a period of partial eclipse, men who emphatically rejected Catholic Christianity were nevertheless impressed by medieval institutions to the extent of wishing to revive important features of them. Indeed, Saint-Simon, Comte, Coleridge and Carlyle may, with only a little special pleading, be regarded as members of the Neo-Catholic movement along with Chateaubriand, de Maistre, Pugin and even Newman. Like their more orthodox associates, they were dismayed by the mainly destructive criticism that so many eighteenth-century writers had indulged in, and thought that the liberal emphasis on individual freedom of thought was in need of correction.

In what follows I can only hope to discuss a few of the problems involved in the idea of a modern spiritual power. I start with a brief account of some formulations made in the early modern period, and shall then go on to consider the place of intellectual and moral authority in our society. Finally and, I am afraid, all too briefly, I shall make some comments on the place of the broadcasting media in the system of temporal and spiritual authority that now exists.

II

The earliest formulation of the idea of a modern spiritual power that I shall take notice of is in Saint-Simon's *Letter from an Inhabitant of Geneva* (1802). Here Saint-Simon distinguishes three social classes, the possessing or owning class, the much larger class of those who own nothing but work for those who do own, and the class of men of science and learning (*savants*) and literary men (*artistes*). It is within this third class that those men of genius arise for whose accommodation and use Saint-Simon felt such personal concern. The whole of society, he thought, benefits from their efforts, and hence they occupy a decisive balancing position within it. Saint-Simon's view of the French Revolution was that at its commencement the intellectuals, as we may call them, took the lead, but were subsequently 'massacred' by the non-possessing class and then had to be resuscitated in order to rescue France from the chaos into which the men without property had plunged it. Saint-Simon thought that the men of property would do well to have the intellectuals on their side, since property-owners are a small minority who are bound to meet opposition from the majority who work without owning. Members of the scientific and literary class, Saint-Simon believed, have a very high opinion of themselves, and think that the rest of society should keep them in comfort (*aisance*) and treat them with respect (*considération*). The monied class should play up to them in this and contribute handsomely towards their upkeep. This would involve setting up a Council of Newton, consisting of the leaders, voted on within each group, of all the main branches of science and art. In addition to doing their scientific and literary work, the members of this body would officiate at temples containing models of Newton's tomb.[2]

Saint-Simon thought, too, that the men without property would be well-advised to support and respect the intellectual class. In Russia, he points out, dissident intellectuals have their noses and ears cut off, and the peasants there live close to starvation. In England, where men of science are even more highly honoured than royalty, the workmen in the towns eat

meat every day. The best thing for the workers to do, therefore, is to press the owners to use their brains on behalf of the mass of the people, but if they are to do this there must be an effective intellectual class with its laboratories and Council of Newton. It concerns everyone, Saint-Simon goes on, so to arrange things that the spiritual power is in the hands of the men of science and the artists, the temporal power is in the hands of the possessing class, while the power of electing those who are to fulfil the function of 'leaders of humanity' will be in the hands of all.

So far the advice has been coming from Saint-Simon himself, but now the word passes from him to God. According to God, if the priests, like those of the Enlightenment period, fall behind their flocks in knowledge, and allow themselves to be dominated by the temporal power, He will withdraw from them the authority (*pouvoir*) of speaking in His name. The Council of Newton, He goes on, is to be His representative on earth, and must maintain the distinction between the spiritual and the temporal power. Re-appearing, so to say, at the foot of Sinai, Saint-Simon ends the book in his own person with the words: 'the temporal power will quite naturally take second place in the line of esteem (*considération*) when the spiritual power has returned to the hands of the men of science.' God himself, it would seem, has decided in favour of Gregory VII, Innocent III, Gregory IX and Innocent IV against the Emperor Frederick II and Dante. The whole community, rich and poor alike, are to honour and support the new priesthood of art and intellect.[3]

In 1820 there appeared under the name of Saint-Simon but by the pen of Auguste Comte an essay entitled *A Summary Estimate of the whole of the Modern Past*. The general theme of it is that just as a new temporal capacity, that of industry, is replacing the old military-feudal power, so a new spiritual capacity, that of science, is replacing the old spiritual power based on theological doctrine. What is of special concern to us here, however, is Comte's view about the need for trust or confidence (*confiance*) in the new scientific authority. The medieval Christian had to *submit* himself to the priesthood, accepting their doctrines without question and with no idea

of correcting them. The modern artisan accepts scientific theories *on trust*. He does not reject them because he cannot demonstrate or establish them himself, but he takes it that those whose job it is to do so have applied the necessary tests. He knows that men of science are unanimous in accepting them. The wider educated public accept the truths of science in much the same way, and mathematicians accept physiological propositions on trust from physiologists, and physiologists accept mathematical propositions on trust from mathematicians. Indeed, mathematicians accept theorems on trust from one another. Comte holds that these acts of trust or faith are provisional only, because those who make them know in general how such matters have been and may be established. There is nothing submissive, slavish or humiliating about such faith, no danger that 'a despotism founded on the sciences' will be established.[4]

Comte develops the theme further in an essay, *Considerations on the Spiritual Power*, written in 1826, after his break with Saint-Simon. The temporal power, he argues, whether in its earlier military or later industrial form enforces its rules and decisions by means of threats. The philosophers of the day, he goes on, teach that everyone inevitably seeks his own interest, so that the laws should be designed to unite each individual's self-interest with the good of all. But in this scheme it is the individual who counts, and out of it all there arises, not a peaceful harmony of interests, but a world—soon to be described by Balzac in *La Comédie Humaine*—in which ambitious men engage in anarchic struggles for pelf and power.[5] This world is truly anarchic, morally, because nothing has replaced the theological morality which the men of the Enlightenment had attacked so effectively, except 'a vague philanthropic intention, incapable of exerting any real influence on the conduct of life'. In this tumultuous world, on 'the majority of subjects that so eminently concern good order', different individuals and groups propose mutually inconsistent policies. Temporal powers concerned with the emergencies of the moment have no time for long views and eternal principles. These, according to Comte, should be the concern of a spiritual power which proclaims the basic moral principles

and educates the population in them. The laziness and selfishness which are dominant in the natural man need to be overcome by devotion to the common good, and it is the business of the spiritual power to organize this from the beginnings in childhood and the family to the control of the state and of international relations. The spiritual power of scientists, artists and literary men also has the function of intellectual and moral education, and of forming a public opinion with views that extend beyond immediate and local utility.

In England the idea of a spiritual power was upheld by Coleridge in his *On the Constitution of the Church and State according to the Idea of Each* (1830). Coleridge's name for the spiritual power is 'the clerisy', and he conceives of it as performing the religious functions of the clergy of the Established Church and having the duty of teaching, maintaining and developing the culture of the nation, and of cultivating the sciences and the liberal arts. In order to avoid being controlled by the government it was to operate on the basis of endowments. Like Saint-Simon and Comte, Coleridge considered that the teaching and opinion-forming intellectuals are a distinct social class, but as he has a different conception of the other classes, his account of its role is not quite the same. Coleridge looks upon the clerisy as an 'estate' of the realm, alongside the other estates of the landowners, and of 'manufacturers', merchants and artisans. The landowners and their tenants look to the past, and oppose change; the manufacturers and merchants look to the future, and are volatile; the clerisy have 'to preserve the stores, to guard the treasures, of past civilization, and thus to bind the present with the past; to perfect and add to the same, and thus to connect the present with the future; but especially to diffuse through the whole community, and to every native entitled to its laws and rights, that quantity and quality of knowledge which was indispensable both for the understanding of those rights, and for the performance of the duties correspondent'. Coleridge, without knowing it, is at one with Comte on the importance of long-term views, upon the teaching of morality—'those qualities and faculties', he writes, 'which characterize our humanity'—and upon independence from the temporal power. But, unlike

Comte and Saint-Simon, he is opposed to any internationally recognized pope or pontiff, on the ground that no single individual can represent the whole church—still less, the whole of humanity.[6]

John Mill came under the influence of Saint-Simon, of Comte and of Coleridge. His belief in the need for a leisured intellectual class is made clear in his review of the first volume of de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* in the *London Review* in 1836. He here says that a leisured class would 'keep before the eyes of the many, what is of so much importance to them, the spectacle of a standard of mental cultivation superior to their own', and goes on to argue that 'political philosophy' shows that many of the most plausible views on social matters are untrue, while seemingly paradoxical views are often the true ones. The masses can only be restrained from making great mistakes about social policies and projects by relying upon those who have had the opportunity of studying society scientifically. In words very similar to those of Comte he writes: 'The multitude will never believe these truths, until tendered to them from an authority in which they have as unlimited confidence as they have in the unanimous voice of astronomers on a question of astronomy.' But although Mill uses the same word as Comte, 'confidence' (*confiance*) for the trust in superior intellectual authority, he goes further than his predecessor, who had qualified it by the adjective 'provisional', in characterizing it as 'unlimited'. At this time therefore, Mill was according even more to authority than Comte had done. However, in the *London and Westminster Review* of 1840 Mill gave his support to Coleridge's conception of a clerisy, emphasizing, first, that it would be in keeping with it that 'the Royal Society might claim a part of the Church property with as good right as the bench of bishops', and, also, that 'an endowed class' is desirable which would add to the store of human knowledge in addition to preserving and transmitting it.[7]

These writers are impressed—Coleridge perhaps to a lesser degree than the others—by the emergence of a new class which may possibly come to dominate society, the class of non-owners, the proletarians, the multitude. This imposes on the

intellectuals new and more positive tasks than the purely critical ones they carried out during the Enlightenment, and makes of them too a new class or estate. This class should fit itself to acquire the authority that once belonged to the Roman Catholic priesthood, but it would have to be an authority based on science and morality instead of revelation and morality. This class, like the priesthood in the past, would be responsible for teaching, and here its members would have to have the sort of authority that teaching presupposes. Leisure, as Mill once put it, endowment as he later said under the influence of Coleridge and Dr Thomas Chalmers, independence from the temporal power as Saint-Simon and Comte more loosely expressed it, enable a distinct interest or estate to develop which the temporal power has to reckon with. Its distinction from the temporal is basic to it. 'Temporal' is interpreted as immediate, topical, ephemeral. Harold Wilson, we may say, gave what may well become classical expression to the point of view which the temporal power necessarily adopts when he said that a week is a long time in politics. The spiritual power, on the other hand, is primarily concerned with that *totum simul* in which past, present and future are one, and in which the whole is in each of the parts. It is the sphere of cultural continuity and identity, of change that is premeditated and prepared, of eternal and immutable morality. If such a power is to take shape, there must be trusted authorities, men whose pronouncements are accepted as right and reasonable, whose theorizing and advice are respected by a population which is not itself in a position to test them in any detail. It is the nature and possibility of such an authority in the modern world that I now propose to consider.

III

We have already considered in a preliminary way Comte's account of trust or confidence. In recommending a social order in which scientific truths are accepted by the masses on trust he points out that within the scientific community itself men qualified in one range of inquiry have to take on trust many or most of the views of experts in other fields. A similar trust

is called for even within a single science if it is at all complex. Publicists, too, like Fontenelle and Voltaire, who were not in a position to test Newton's major demonstrations, nevertheless rely upon the unanimity of those who spend their lives on such subjects, and their readers in turn rely on their expository skill and good faith. There is no submission or intellectual subservience about this, since those who take views and theories on trust in this way know how they are or may be supported and established. The men of science are not trusted merely because they are unanimous, but mainly because they are thought to go about their researches in the right way. A skilled workman can, in general, understand how experimental science progresses, since he knows from his own successes and failures how the nature of recalcitrant things determines whether he calculated right or wrong. His trust or confidence is not a submission to authority, as the acceptance of views merely because an accepted authority proclaims them would be. It is irrational, on this view, to accept statements, views or theories on the sole ground that some individual or body, respected on grounds other than their expertise in dispelling error and establishing truth, has enunciated or endorsed them. On the other hand—and this is less often noticed—it would be irrational *not* to place confidence in truths that have the general support of the scientific community and have been subjected to suitable tests and corroborations. Although it is irrational, then, to submit one's mind to that of another, it is also irrational to reject everything that others say, even when we are not in a position to test or verify. Descartes was not being rational in rejecting everything his nurse had told him. It is not necessary to be snobbish in order to be rational. There is no one we cannot learn from.

According to St John's Gospel, Thomas did not believe the disciples who had told him that Christ had appeared to them, but when Christ appeared again and Thomas was present He asked Thomas to touch His wounds and put his hand into His side. Christ then asked Thomas not to become untrusting (*apistos*) but to be trusting (*pistos*).[8] Thomas's demand for personal and sensible verification—with which, no doubt, we all to some extent sympathize—was not to be allowed,

according to the Gospel account, to become a principle of his future relations with his friends. Such verification is only sometimes possible, and we must trust one another willy-nilly. Speech, it would be well for us to recognize, is essentially trustworthy, while lies and deceptions are abnormalities in its working. As Thomas Reid puts it: 'We speak truth by instinct', and to this 'principle of veracity' there is a corresponding 'principle of credulity' or principle of trust. Reid also argued that the continued acquisition of knowledge depends upon trusting the testimony of others. A child who attempted to test everything his parents and teachers told him would soon fall far behind in his education, and, indeed, would, in Reid's words, 'perish for lack of knowledge'. Reid thought this so important that he included it among his 'First Principles of Contingent Truths' as the principle 'that there is a certain regard due to human testimony in matters of fact, and even to human authority in matters of opinion'. This regard should be given, according to Reid, both to what others report to us about what they have observed and to what others believe on the basis of evidence. The regard to be given to testimony may have to be paid to anyone, since anyone may be in a position to have observed what one has not observed oneself. Everyone is often an authority of this sort as regards matters of fact, and there is no distinction or hierarchy about it. Belief or opinion, however, is not quite the same, as it has to be supported by evidence or reasons, and some people are much more skilful at understanding and presenting these than others are, and hence must carry more authority. Even so, a provisional willingness to accept some opinions on trust is as essential to the growth of knowledge as is the provisional credulity as to facts or information.

How is this affected, then, by lies, deceptions and mistakes? Certainly, an individual whose trustfulness was never upset by such things would become a perpetual victim, undiscriminatingly falling in with truth and falsehood alike. He would never succeed in distinguishing science from superstition or in acquiring an acceptable view of the world. Without a measure of circumspection and a readiness to think for oneself it would be impossible to save oneself from error and mistakes or to

protect oneself and one's friends from deception. Mistakes can be, and often are, rectified with the co-operation of the very individual who has misled us through his error. The makers of innocent errors remain in a generally trustful relationship with the parties who have been misled by them. Deceivers, on the other hand, cut themselves off from the community because, once they are discovered, they must lose the trust which speech essentially requires, and are not likely to take part in rectifying the errors they have deliberately instigated. Deception disrupts the community not so much by giving rise to error as by engendering distrust. Mere error prompts to correction by deliberate co-operation. The more that distrust spreads, the more must each individual be forced into relying on his own resources. That universal distrust, 'diffidence of one another', that Hobbes attributed to men in the state of nature, is hence a derangement rather than a source of human society. In the realm of human knowledge some faith in others and a distrust of one's own unaided efforts are both of them essential. The extreme doubting Thomas, in distrusting everyone else somehow places himself above them and claims sole authority for himself. His intellectual pride, appropriate only to a being capable of building up the whole of knowledge through his own efforts, must stunt and stultify his attempts to build up his own. His rancorous distrust of others deprives him of their intellectual good offices. Rationality comprises trust as well as criticism, an acceptance of what others can tell us as well as a readiness to test when this is necessary.

This trust or confidence, it may be noticed at this point, is essential, not only for the growth of knowledge, but for the continuance of social life itself. Universal diffidence or distrust would require unobtainable guarantees before any act beneficial to others was ventured upon. Fear that others would always take advantage of altruistic actions would permanently inhibit the performance of them. Kant has been criticized by Schopenhauer and others for giving, against the requirements of his own *non*-prudential ethics, a prudential account of benevolence when he argues that everyone needs the help of others and should therefore be willing to help them. But the

point may well be that mutual benefits depend upon mutual trust rather than that others won't help you unless you help them. Closely linked with this is Kant's other view that deception and wrong-doing generally are *ab*normalities which divide the wrong-doers from the rest of the community, whereas acting rightly associates the agent with society as a whole. Trust is the cement which holds the community together, distrust the solvent which makes it crumble.

Let us return, however, to Comte's view that giving trust to intellectual authorities need not be submissive, but can be of the same nature as the trust that scientists have in one another and the trust that educated non-specialists have in scientists as a whole. What makes it non-submissive is the general awareness that scientific views are the result of methods of arguing and investigating that have the confidence of all. We all know what it is to rely on others for information, and we all have to rely on specialists for theories that explain physical phenomena. One of the functions of philosophy is to keep the educated public continuously aware of the different and varying types of human knowledge and of scientific method. In this way it makes the inevitable acceptance of scientific views more rational than mere submission would be. Unfortunately, however, this quasi-rational acceptance, as we may call it, cannot be conveyed through the whole of our society, and many members of it must remain in a situation of intellectual tutelage. As we have seen, Comte believed that skilled artisans must by the nature of their occupations understand the importance of experiment and recognize the recalcitrance of nature. (It may be doubted whether assembly-line working has the same effect.) On the other hand it has to be said that people educated in literature and the arts may incline to view nature in terms that are too fluid and volatile, and hence to expect from society a malleability that is not there. Such people dislike facts, and seize on philosophies which can be taken to deny that there are any.

So far I have considered the spiritual authority of specialists in the natural sciences, but as Comte saw, in modern times a spiritual authority must also be concerned with the sciences of man and society. The importance in this regard of economics,

and what Mill vaguely called 'political philosophy' was well appreciated quite early in the nineteenth century. It will be remembered that Mill thought that 'the multitude' will not accept the truths of 'political philosophy' unless they are transmitted to them as the unanimous view of an authority in which they have 'unlimited confidence'. Earlier, Dr Thomas Chalmers, whose views Mill respected, had written that 'we are not aware of a likelier instrument than a judicious course of economical doctrine, for tranquillizing the popular mind, and removing from it all those delusions which are the main causes of popular disaffection and discontent', and that its study 'will prove not a stimulant, but a sedation to all sorts of disaffection and discontent'.[9] This shows what a short step it may be from the formulation of theories about the operations of human society to attempting to impose them on the intellectually unsophisticated. Chalmers and Mill at this time regarded social science as an independent exercise of human rationality which would gain the intellectual assent of all who could apply their minds to it. Since then, of course, the working classes have been presented, in the form of Marxism, with an economic theory for their own use to justify their rejection of the 'official' theories. Even within the 'official' economic theory there are disputes which seem to shadow the political conflict between socialists and non-socialists. It thus becomes terribly easy for conflicts between would-be wielders of the temporal power to be continued within the spiritual power, and even to take hold of it altogether. Science then gets transformed into ideology, that is, into justifications of preconceived social standpoints and objectives.

Julien Benda in his *La Trahison des Clercs* (1927) correctly characterized this aspect of intellectual life in the twentieth century.[10] The intellectual party men are less obsessed by nationalism than they were when he wrote, but the hatreds he referred to have been intensified and have spread from imaginative literature, with which he was mainly concerned, to the social and even the biological sciences. 'The condensation of the political passions', he wrote, 'into a small number of simple hatreds deeply rooted in the human heart is an advance made by the modern age.'[11] The reasons for this, he thought, are

first the spread of politics itself, through universal suffrage and the activities of class and other interest groups. Since 1927, we may add, the idea that governments are the cause and cure of all human ills has spread to a truly ridiculous degree, and has inevitably brought political considerations into more and more areas of social study. Benda also mentions that intellectuals have more opportunities than hitherto of taking part in public life, and many of them are hence tempted to turn from thought to the exercise of power. They are tempted, too, to use their skills in ways that will earn them a greater share of bourgeois comforts, and nowadays, of course, there is no need for them to defend the bourgeois cause in order to do this. According to Benda, they have become obsessed by the romantic opposition to what is rational and universal; artistic merit is regarded as the ultimate test of value in opposition to the rational tests of coherence, continuity and permanence. Since Benda wrote this tendency has continued. As religion is replaced by art it is hoped that art will provide some sort of objective for politics. But existentialism, situational ethics, the multiplication and acceleration of artistic styles make moral consensus more difficult of achievement than ever before. In addition to the politics of the disciplined party struggle there is the politics of protest and self-assertion which is even more easy for the intellectual to take part in. Some of these movements (Existentialism, for example) were first conceived within the spiritual power, but others (Syndicalism, for example) originate outside it and hope to gain control of it as a means in this quest for power. The result is that the spiritual power, instead of being an independent authority capable of inspiring trust, becomes a mirror of the temporal power across which pass images of the warring temporal interests.

It may be said that out of the kaleidoscope of conflicting images the truth will finally emerge. Whether this is possible, however, depends upon the degree of control that the temporal interests have over what goes on in the spiritual sphere. Politics is concerned with the acquisition and maintenance of power. Science is concerned with understanding and explaining. Politics is primarily practical, science is theoretical. If science is subordinated to politics, to the practical and the

temporal, demonstration will be infected with rhetoric, and scientists will be placed and respected largely in accordance with their political allegiance and standing. Simony is the buying and selling of spiritual goods, *merx spiritualis*. It is mainly committed in modern times in the use of academic office for political ends, its manipulation or control by outside political interests. Once this becomes widespread, explanations cease to be utilizable as general guides to action but become themselves instruments in the struggle between those who are in the action. The map is torn up and the pieces thrown to the quarrelling travellers.

There is no infallible method of preventing such an outcome, but the Chalmers-Coleridge-Mill idea of an endowed body concerned with teaching, scholarship and research has much to be said for it. Its endowments would enable it to make appointments on its own authority, and to research into what it decided upon itself without having to get funds from a government or a party. Theoretical understanding would therefore have a predominant influence on its procedures and policies, while practical emergencies would have little direct influence. No doubt it would periodically relapse into sloth and would have to be stimulated into reforming itself. No doubt there would be nepotism, too, perhaps of a degree that would need outside intervention. Intellectual stagnation would be another danger, but this would be less likely to go far in a community where the intellect runs free than in one that is constantly under political pressure. The very existence of such an endowed institution, however, would depend upon its continued control of the sources of its income, and this, in its turn, presupposes a form of society in which independent groups can own and control property. There are many such forms, of course, feudal, capitalist, and mixed capitalist and socialist, but endowed independence is not compatible with a form of society in which all capital, or even most of it, is owned and controlled by the state. An independent spiritual power has to have an independent material support. I suggest, too, that it would have to be what is today called 'an establishment'. Controllers of endowments are bound to have a considerable degree of fellow-feeling. They will want to keep

it in what they consider the right hands. They will not forget the story of the Trojan Horse. Science and art are unsuitable subjects for control by universal suffrage and those whose endowed trust it is to uphold them would not be much affected by popular outcry.[12]

We have now considered, in very general terms, how a new spiritual authority in which the natural and the social sciences replaced revelation might exist alongside the temporal power of government and the economy. It would obtain rational trust for its intellectual pronouncements as long as there was a general understanding and acceptance of the methods used in establishing them. But a spiritual power that gives practical advice to the temporal power would also have to have a moral authority, and leading supporters of the idea of a spiritual power have emphasized this. Comte saw it as teaching and instilling altruism; Coleridge attributed to it the function of strengthening 'those faculties and qualities which characterize our *humanity*'; Mill was for making the individual conscience an effective sanction against evil behaviour;[13] Comte, like Newman, distrusted this merely internal motive, and hoped for an organized secular priesthood authorized to guide the laity by means of public symbols and ceremonies.

However, the moral authority of a spiritual power must be very different from its intellectual authority. Its intellectual authority depends upon there being in its ranks individual scholars who are constantly making additions to specialized branches of knowledge. But morality is not a matter for experts, although moral philosophy is. Simple (if not *too* simple) unlettered men know how to be honest and brave and kind. Indeed, the criminal code of the temporal power is an important element in the moral education of most people, in that the penalties for crimes are a rough index of their heinousness. The Emperor Frederick II was one of many temporal rulers who have regarded the upholding of Justice as his special moral function.[14] But the moral point of view, like that of common sense, is for everyone who has the ordinary perceptions and can recognize what it is that he ought *not* to do. It is of essential importance for the temporal power, for unless it is adopted by a considerable proportion of the population

the criminal laws could not be enforced, since police can only be effective when they have to act only against a small minority. It may be said that widespread *fear* of punishment would secure this. Kant and Fichte thought this and held that a political community could be held together by the quasi-mechanical operation of self-interest. Kant, indeed, went as far as to say that even rational *devils* could form a state.[15] Against this we may argue, however, that each rational devil would evade the law or commit crimes whenever he thought he could thereby profit with impunity, and that such a general readiness to break the law would make it inoperative. If each rational devil breaks the law and relies on the rest to keep it, the astute villainy of each will ruin them all. If each one decides to keep the law, he has to trust the others not to take advantage of his law-abidingness. Trust, therefore, is essential to the enforcement of a system of law. But in trusting others we assume that they will not necessarily take advantage of us, and hence we credit them, if not with benevolence towards us, at any rate with neutrality. If others are not our brothers at least they are not our enemies, and our attitude to them is one of non-maleficence. In this way trust brings us to the lower reaches of morality, although not necessarily to all that is involved in the moral point of view.

Comte and Coleridge and others who have advocated the establishment of a spiritual power, however loosely organized, have considered that teaching should be one of its functions, and it can hardly be doubted that science and scholarship should have a preponderant influence on any general system of education. It seems reasonable, too, that a spiritual power should concern itself with the moral and social effects of new scientific discoveries and conceptions, and should prevent them from bursting out upon society as at present with no arrangements for their reception. Ideas can be freely shifted about and juggled with great theoretical benefit, but constant social upheaval is, quite literally, *de*moralizing, because of the changes of role and of identity that it necessarily brings about. I say 'necessarily', because social upheaval may be regarded as *consisting in* changes of this nature. When social revolutions take place social landmarks and whole professions and functions

disappear, and much past training is made irrelevant.[16] A strongly organized spiritual establishment would persistently diminish the importance of the ephemeral by maintaining links between the evanescent present and the durable past, the moral point of view would be taken up at a position from which a large tract of human history can be surveyed. The temporal would be made subordinate insofar—and it is not very far—as humans can bring this about.

IV

What has just been said about the place of morality shows that the distinction between the temporal and the spiritual power is consistent with an important overlap, just as, in the medieval world the subjects of the Emperor were also members of the Church. A spiritual power in the modern world would be a network of independent schools, universities, and research institutes, capable of financing their own operations and of sustaining an intellectual and moral authority by the patent effectiveness of their operations and creations. Such bodies as the Royal Academy extend this to the creative arts, but in modern society artists and literary men generally prefer to work as independent individuals. Newspapers are another example of overlap between the two powers. Journalists work for newspapers and journals which compete in the temporal world of business and politics, yet they may educate opinion as well as help to form it, and they sometimes make contributions to literature. Some of them are entertainers too, now that newspapers provide amusement as well as information and party-political encouragement. The liberal case for competition among newspapers and journals is not destroyed by the growth of these additional features, but they, and the financial dependence of newspapers upon advertisers do bring complications to it. The position argued in Mill's *On Liberty* is still further complicated by the coming of radio and television. These are institutions whose chief end is entertainment, yet they are also engaged in disseminating (and in most cases collecting) news, in the discussion of political and social policies, in the presentation of plays and criticism of them,

and in education, both direct and indirect. Furthermore, this variegated complex of diffusive capacity is a powerful establishment projecting heroes and heroines and patterns of life to the whole nation. It is not a power that has very close analogies with the two powers we have been considering, except that those who operate it have, like spokesmen for the spiritual power, always called for its independence of government.

During the early years of the British Broadcasting Corporation, indeed earlier, when it was the British Broadcasting Company, the attempt was made to incorporate it in the spiritual power. Sir John Reith, as he then was, upheld the independence of the Corporation during the General Strike of 1926, although he also said that it had to be 'for the Government in the crisis'.[17] In a memorandum to the staff at the time of the transformation of the Company into the Corporation he said that it was the Corporation's function to raise standards of taste 'and to reflect that spirit of common sense Christian ethics which we believe to be a necessary component of citizenship and culture'. The earlier Company, he said, had 'tried to found a tradition of public service and to dedicate the service of broadcasting to the service of humanity in its fullest sense'.[18] In a book, *Broadcast over Britain* (1924), he defended giving the public 'what we think they need' on the ground that 'few know what they want and very few what they need'.[19] Sir William Haley continued in this course, and described the BBC as 'an instrument of social purpose and a means to raise public taste'.[20] The present Director-General is much more hesitant. He is in no doubt about maintaining the independence of the Corporation, but thinks that to aim at raising public taste 'is to adopt a somewhat paternalistic attitude which may seem out of tune with our times'. 'The BBC', he says 'does not exist to shape society to some pre-determined pattern' and does not set itself up 'as an arbiter of taste or a manipulator of society'. (The rhetoric of the word 'manipulator', with its Machiavellian overtones, is obvious.) What, according to Mr Curran, the Corporation should do is to 'give its audiences a clear picture of the prevailing scale of values within society and will reflect the order in which society as a

whole (often described as the consensus) clarifies those values. By being truthful and responsible it achieves more than it would ever achieve by setting itself up as the nation's guide in matters of taste or morals.'[21]

Broadcasting in Britain began with negotiations between the Post Office and various companies concerned with the manufacture of electrical apparatus. John Reith, who admired Dr Thomas Chalmers so much that he gave Stanley Baldwin a book about him,[22] was unwilling to be nothing but a purveyor of light entertainment and saw in broadcasting an opportunity for spreading education and enlightenment. He therefore diverted broadcasting from the temporal into the spiritual sphere and, for the most part, it kept there until the coming of television. Mr Curran has to be less ambitious, and there is a noticeable contrast between his strong plea for independence and his unwillingness to lead in taste or morals. Perhaps the apparent conflict can be settled by arguing that the independence he desires is independence from governmental control, while the subservience (if we may so call it) is subservience to the people in all their variety. Moral subservience I think we are justified in calling it when the BBC is 'to give its audiences a clear picture of the prevailing scale of values'. The word 'reflect' which is used immediately afterwards has the same suggestion of inertness as giving a clear picture does, although it is possible that Mr Curran means that the BBC will have a moral point of view and that this will be the moral point of view of the consensus.[23]

In the same issue of the *BBC Handbook* another spokesman for the Corporation adds to our knowledge of its moral point of view by saying that the BBC is 'not neutral as between truth and untruth, justice and injustice, freedom and slavery, compassion and cruelty, tolerance and intolerance (including racial intolerance).[24] It is significant that racial intolerance should be specifically mentioned, and, indeed, that tolerance and intolerance should find a place in a list of virtues and vices at all. We might describe it as a markedly liberal or Whiggish list. Freedom and slavery, tolerance and intolerance, compassion and cruelty, resonant as they are, consort rather well with such documents as the American Declaration of Inde-

pendence. The basic but untheoretical and unpolitical opposition of honesty and dishonesty is not included, unless it is to be seen as merged with truth and falsity or justice and injustice. The difference between this list and what Reith may be supposed to have meant by 'common sense Christian ethics' is seen by the omission of love and kindness (compassion is not the same as kindness) from the list of virtues, and of greed, sloth and envy from the list of vices. In general, slavery, or rather the causing of it, injustice, cruelty and intolerance are the vices of men in power or authority, and tolerance and justice are almost equally governmental, unless justice is taken in the sense of commutative justice. There is, if not a suggestion at any rate an impression that the major vices and some of the virtues are attached to governments rather than to individual men and women who, in the Christian scheme, can be greedy, lazy or loving whatever their social position.

Reith had thought that the broadcasting of news on the radio might reduce the need for news in newspapers, and that newspapers might, as a result, concentrate on being 'organs of opinion and comment'.[25] If this had happened, broadcasting might have kept out of party-political activities and would have been in a better position to fulfil that role of a spiritual power which Reith so much favoured. However, things went differently, and as soon as political discussion became an accepted feature of broadcasting, the problem of how to conduct it arose. It would go against liberal democracy if the differing party views were not impartially expressed in such discussions. Impartial presentation of the news is difficult enough, but the impartial handling of controversial discussion is more difficult still. It might seem evident that impartiality in this context means that the various points of view about a policy or proposal should be expressed. Sir William Haley, however, suggested that such impartiality might have the result that 'the listeners can never come to a conclusion on the basis of the argument'.[26] Sir Hugh Greene thought that if each discussion were so balanced there might be a loss in 'liveliness and impact', and that these would be increased if the balance were sought 'over a period, perhaps within a series of related

programmes'.[27] It will be seen that there has been a change of emphasis from a possible social effect of impartiality in every discussion programme, viz. public irresolution, to the possible dullness of a sequence of such individually impartial programmes. Clearly entertainment counts for more with Greene than with Haley, and it is interesting to notice that it had counted for nothing with Reith who, in connection with news broadcasts had written: 'Of course impartiality lessened in some ways the interest and influence of the Service. But if broadcasting were sometimes colourless, democracy was rather colourless too. It was of first importance that the Service should be trusted.'[28]

The idea of achieving impartiality by arranging a balance, not in each discussion but through a whole series of discussions, is a strange one. It could be done if one point of view were put forward in one programme, another in another and so on. But these would hardly then be discussions, but monologues or choruses sung in unison. Let us suppose, however, that an overall impartiality were obtained without what we might call unit impartiality. No one would perceive this *as* impartiality except the individual who planned all the programmes and those individuals who watched and heard them all, and then only if they had good memories or could obtain a complete transcript. For the rest, it would be like the best of all possible worlds which, according to Leibniz, is compatible with unrequited individual suffering which adds a pleasing discord to the whole. In any case, the supposition of an overall impartiality should not be accepted. If a discussion programme is impartial when the relevant points of view are given in it as accurately as possible, a lapse from such impartiality cannot be rectified by some balancing lapse elsewhere. It is no rectification of the scales of justice if, after, say, a discussion of the Industrial Relations Act at which only views adverse to it are expressed, or which is 'rigged' against the Act, there follows a discussion of the Public Schools at which only Public School headmasters speak. One failure to be impartial cannot be cancelled out by another, and two such failures are worse than one. The sort of balance that might be achieved over a series of discussion programmes as distinct from a series of mono-

logues and unisons, is a balance of party representatives and of the times they each speak. This has the merit of being measurable and the defect of having nothing to do with the relevance and cogency of the arguments used. I suggest, therefore, that impartiality as balance—'the essence of impartiality is balance',[29] says Greene—is not merely difficult, but logically impossible of achievement. When it is introduced, the temporal power is being robed in the symbols of the spiritual power, politics is being dressed up as intellectual interchange, party strife is being substituted for argument.

Impartiality, then, is not likely to be achieved through any balance of political interests. The balancing of interests is a temporal affair with which the intellectual assessment of arguments has little to do. Milton brought this out in the *Areopagitica* when he wrote that truth has nothing to do with 'policies, stratagems and licencings'. The relationships of men who seek for theoretical enlightenment are quite different from those of men who seek party or political advantage. The latter cannot afford to be frank or trusting, the former have to be. Stratagems succeed by means of errors intentionally induced, whereas unintentional errors can only be overcome by admitting and co-operating to correct them. Politicians seldom find it possible to confess that they were wrong. Once broadcasting admitted party-orientated discussion it plunged right into the temporal sphere.

Would entertainment have brought it there anyway? It need not have brought it into the political part of the temporal sphere, but we live at a time when political manoeuvre occurs very extensively, and even actors regard their profession as a means of encouraging social revolution. Political discussion and entertainment, therefore, easily merge into one another. At one time the Fool or Court Jester was both entertainer and commentator. Enid Welsford, an historian of that institution,[30] writes of the Fool in *King Lear*: 'the mere appearance of the familiar figure in cap and bells would at once indicate to the audience where the "*punctum indifferens*", the impartial critic, the mouthpiece of real sanity, was to be found'. Louis XI's fool was hanged for reproaching his master before a large company with instigating the murder of his brother, and

Brantôme says: 'It is not good to entrust oneself to these Fools, who often show themselves as wise men and say what they know, or guess the truth by some divine instinct'. Better known in this country is Archibald Armstrong, the Fool of James I and Charles I. (His title was *joculator domini regis.*) After clashing with Archbishop Laud by pronouncing the grace 'Great praise be given to God and little laud to the devil' he retired to Scotland a rich man. Earlier a book had been dedicated to him as 'the bright eye-dazzling mirror of mirth, adelantado of alacrity, the pump of pastime, spout of sport, and regent of ridiculous confabulations. . . .' It is a risky life, as broadcasting executives all know, and a life subordinated to the temporal sovereign, whether he be king or people.

The medieval Fool was, at his own risk, free from censorship. His quick wits were often a means of humiliating his or his master's enemies, and this made him popular. When he joked about them, affairs of state took on an air of caricature, and authority, even that of his master, was in danger from the sort of joke that makes an answer impossible. In seventeenth-century Germany learned pedants were sometimes brought in to play the part of a Fool in learned debate, and it is not certain now whether or not they were aware of the effect they were producing. The Fool made things ambiguous. As with broadcasting, the object was a certain image or a required response rather than the cogency of arguments. Accusations or insinuations can hardly be countered because anyone who tried to do so would show himself humourless or pompous. Indeed, by raising or lowering the level at which seriousness passes into pomposity, the authority of reason itself can be increased or diminished. It is a function of the Fool to lower it, because otherwise he would have to make way for a respectable member of the Spiritual Power.

NOTES

1 According to Walter D. Ullman, *Medieval Papalism. The Political Theories of the Medieval Canonists* (London, 1949), the Papacy's Canonist supporters held that the Pope is to the Emperor as mind is to body (p. 82), but this hardly allows for the Emperor's concern with earthly justice and earthly happiness. The distinction between *pouvoir* and *capacité* is drawn by Comte in his *Sommaire Appréciation de l'Ensemble du Passé Moderne*, which appeared in 1820 in l'*Organisateur* under Saint-Simon's signature. It is discussed in H. Gouhier's *La Jeunesse d'Auguste Comte*, vol. III (Paris, 1941).

2 A design for Newton's tomb by Etienne Louis Boullée in 1784 shows an attempt to associate a sort of scientific piety with the geometrical regularities of the solar system well before the Revolution. W. G. Kalnein and M. Levey, *Art and Architecture of the Eighteenth Century in France* (London, 1973), p. 348 and plate 297. Charles Fourier, in his *Théorie des Quatre Mouvements* (1808) regards himself as extending Newton's physical conceptions to the explanation of human affairs. The four movements are physical, organic, animal and social. Saint-Simon was rather less enthusiastic for Newton in 1808, when he wrote in his *Introduction aux Travaux Scientifiques du XIX Siècle*, in connection with *'l'École Newto-Lockiste'*, *'Pour le progrès de la science, pour le bonheur de l'humanité, pour la gloire de la Nation française, l'Institut devrait travailler au perfectionnement de la théorie, il devrait revenir à la direction de Descartes'*.

3 The text I have used of Saint-Simon's *Lettres d'un Habitant de Genève* is in vol. I of *Œuvres de Claude-Henri de Saint-Simon* (Editions Anthropos, Paris, 1966). This is a *'réimpression analstatique'* of the Paris 1868 edition of his works. Part only of the *Lettres* is translated by F. M. H. Markham in his *Henri, Comte de Saint-Simon: Selected Writings* (Oxford, 1952).

4 A translation of Comte's *Sommaire Appréciation de l'Ensemble du Passé Moderne* (1820) is printed in *Auguste Comte: Early Essays on Social Philosophy*, translated from the French of Auguste Comte by Henry Dix Hutton (London, 1911). It is also reprinted in Volume IV of Comte's *Traité de Politique Positive* (Paris, 1854, English translation, London, 1877). *Considérations sur le Pouvoir Spirituel* is translated in the same volume.

5 Comte was impressed by Charles Dunoyer's *L'Industrie et la Morale considérées dans leur Rapports avec la Liberté* (Paris, 1825). Chapter

VIII is entitled '*Du Degré de liberté qui est compatible avec la vie des peuples qui n'ont pas de privilèges, mais chez qui tout est emporté vers la recherche des places.*' Dunoyer complains (p. 294) that after the '*corps enseignant*' and '*collèges particuliers*' were abolished, education was centralized in Paris and all teachers became '*fonctionnaires*'. '*Le hasard, l'intrigue, la faveur dispose d'un grand nombre d'emplois . . . le gouvernement devient une loterie dans laquelle chacun se flatte d'avoir un bon lot . . . Ne cherchez ici un esprit public, car il n'y a pas de public, ni esprit de corps, car il n'y a plus de corps; ni indépendance individuelle, car qui peuvent être les individus devant le colosse formidable que l'ambition universelle a élevé?*' (pp. 301–2). Place-hunting spreads the vices of the court throughout the whole population (p. 303). This chapter is a social and economic analysis of the sort of society which Balzac wrote of in his novels.

6 There is an edition of *On the Constitution of the Church and State* in Everyman's University Library with notes by John Barrell, J. M. Dent and Sons, 1972. Although in this book Coleridge does not use the language of spiritual and temporal power, he uses it elsewhere: *Specimens of Table Talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Edinburgh, 1905), p. 239, dated 6 May 1833: 'Under Constantine the spiritual power became a complete reflex of the temporal. There were four patriarchs and four prefects and so on.' Coleridge's three classes of landowner, clergy and merchants, manufacturers and artisans are similar to the classes of *Possidenti*, *Dotti*, and *Commercianti*, the Electors established for the Italian Republic set up at a congress at Lyons in 1802. Details are given in André Fugier, *Napoléon et l'Italie* (Paris, 1947), pp. 114ff. The College of *Possidenti* was to meet in Milan, the *Dotti* in Bologna and the *Commercianti* in Breschia. The chief Italian negotiator was Count Melzi d'Eril, the chief French negotiator Talleyrand. Roederer was responsible for the main idea of the Constitution, which seems to be based on the pre-Revolutionary distinction of Noblesse, Clergé, Tiers-Etat. Coleridge could have read about this constitution while he was leader-writer for the *Morning Post*, 1799–1802, as he regularly received copies of the *Le Moniteur* and other French newspapers. See *Essays on his own Time* (ed. by his daughter, Sara Coleridge, London, 1850), vols. 1 and 2 and Donald Sultana, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge in Malta and Italy* (Oxford, 1969), pp. 61–2. The constitution may also have been known to Saint-Simon. It is mentioned in Hegel's (unpublished) *Constitution of Germany* (1802).

7 Mill writes '. . . we honour Coleridge . . . for having vindicated against Bentham and Adam Smith and the whole eighteenth century, the principle of an endowed class for the cultivation of learning and for diffusing its results among the community . . . On this subject we are at one with Coleridge, and with the other great defender of endowed establishments, Dr Chalmers; and we consider the definitive establishment of this fundamental principle, to be one of the permanent benefits which political science owes to the Conservative philosophers.' J. S. Mill, *Essays on Ethics, Religion and Society. Collected Works Vol. X* (Toronto and London, 1969), pp. 150–1. Mill had also supported Coleridge and criticized Adam Smith's belief in free trade in unsubsidized education, in 'Corporation and State Property', an article published in the *Jurist*, 1833. This is published again in J. S. Mill, *Essays on Economics and Society*. Collected Works, vol. IV (London and Toronto, 1961). Even so, Mill was emphatic that endowments needed to be controlled, as can be seen from his remarks on the subject in his *Autobiography*. The book by Chalmers that Mill had in mind is *On the Use and Abuse of Literary and Ecclesiastical Endowments* (Glasgow, 1827), where Chalmers argues that the demand for education is very different from the physical appetite for 'those necessaries, or even the luxuries of life, which constitute the great materials of commerce . . . Generally speaking, the more ignorant a man is, the more satisfied he is to remain so. But the more hungry a man is, the less satisfied he is to remain so.' (pp. 25–6.) Chalmers also says that subjects that only a few scholars are capable of learning and pursuing just could not be kept in existence without subsidies of some sort, and Oxford and Cambridge owe their eminence in scholarship largely to their endowments. Without the endowments of Edinburgh University Dr Thomas Brown could not have had students for his 'arduous heights of recondite and original speculation in which he acquired such eminent distinction in the world of mental philosophy . . .' It is interesting to notice that Chalmers criticizes the way in which the monasteries were dissolved, 'absorbed into a state of mere property by the rapacity of individuals.' (146), when they could have been used 'for the purposes both of literary and Christian education.' Disraeli takes the same view in *Sybil* (1845), when he says 'Never was there such a plunder' (chapter v). Bentham, in his *Rationale of Reward* (1825), had advocated universities linked with industry, i.e. as aspects of the temporal power.

8 *John*, xx, 24–9. It should be noted that Jesus speaks about *becoming* untrusting, with the implication that trust is the original state. Not all translations make this clear. The first two quotations in this paragraph are from Reid's *Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* (1764), the rest from his *Essays on the Intellectual Powers* (1785), VI, chs. 4 and 5.

9 Thomas Chalmers, *The Christian and Civic Economy of Large Towns*, three vols. (Glasgow, 1826), vol. 3, p. 386.

10 *La trahison des Clercs* (Paris, 1927), pp. 195ff.

11 *La trahison des Clercs*, p. 17.

12 Mill, in his 1835 review of de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* in the *London Review* refers to de Tocqueville's comparison of the subservience of his courtiers to Louis XIV with the subservience of

modern democratic leaders to the people. They do not say 'Sire' but '*ils parlent sans cesse des lumières naturelles de leurs maitres*' (p. 118).

13 *Utilitarianism* (Everyman University Library), pp. 31–2.

14 He claimed to receive his authority both from God and from the people. Ernst Kantorowicz says of Frederick's *Liber Augustalis* 'the book takes on the character of a sort of moral doctrine (*Sittenlehre*) as the people were required to accept its contents *tam in judiciis quam extra judicia*'. *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite. Ergänzungsband* (Düsseldorf and München, 1931), p. 99. By founding the University of Naples and trying to abolish the University of Bologna (p. 119) Frederick was subordinating the spiritual to the temporal power.

15 The reference is to *Perpetual Peace* (1795) 'First Supplement'. Kant here writes of 'knowing the mechanism of nature in order to use it on men, organizing the conflict of the hostile intentions present in a people in such a way that they must compel themselves to submit to coercive laws.' In his *Foundation of Natural Law* (1796–7) Fichte wrote of the state as not needing morality and not needing 'trust and faith' (*Treu und Glauben*) but working through the mechanism of coercion. Hegel in his *Essay on the Ways of treating Natural Law* (1802–3) objected, rightly in my opinion, that the coercion could not be effective in the absence of 'trust and faith'. This was also Comte's view. In the first place, Comte argues that trust (*confiance*) is essential to the existence of human society. '*Aucune association quelconque*' he writes '. . . *ne saurait réellement subsister sans un certain degré de confiance réciproque, à la fois intellectuelle et morale, dont chacun éprouve le besoin continu d'une foule de notions à la formation desquelles il doit rester étranger, et qu'il ne peut admettre que sur la foi d'autrui.*' *Cours de Philosophie Positive*, Lecture 46, vol. IV (Paris, 1869), p. 50. In Lecture 48, after stating the theory of the '*consensus universelle de l'organisme social*' (p. 242), he writes: '*Ainsi l'autorité dérive réellement du concours, et non le concours de l'autorité* . . .' (p. 244). These lectures were first published in 1838.

16 'By this unprincipled facility of changing the state as often, and as much, and in as many ways as there are floating fancies or fashions, the whole chain and continuity of the commonwealth would be broken. No one generation could link with the other. Men would become little better than the flies of a summer. As soon as the most able instructor had completed his laborious course of institution, instead of sending forth his pupil accomplished in a virtuous discipline fitted to procure him attention and respect in his place in society, he would find everything altered, and that he had turned out a poor creature to the contempt and derision of the world, ignorant of the true grounds of estimation.' Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. When Michael Oakeshott writes 'all change is an emblem of extinction', he means extinction of the self which undergoes it.

17 Asa Briggs, *History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom. I. The Birth of Broadcasting*, (London, 1961), p. 363.

18 John C. W. Reith, *Into the Wind* (London, 1949), p. 116.

19 The whole passage reads: 'It is occasionally indicated to us that we are apparently setting out to give the public what we think they need—and not what they want—but few know what they want and very few what they need . . . In any case it is better to over-estimate the mentality of the public than to underestimate it.' (p. 34). Reith's aims are briefly stated on p. 147: 'to bring the best of everything into the greatest number of homes' and this summarises p. 34 . . . 'to carry into the greatest number of homes everything that is best in every department of human knowledge, endeavour and achievement, and to avoid things things that are, or may be, hurtful.' The heading of Part IV, chapter I—'Striking a Balance' introduces a term which, as we shall see has proved troublesome. Reith meant by this a balance sheet of the Corporation's success or failure.

20 Quoted in the *B.B.C. Handbook* (1973), p. 176.

21 The *B.B.C. Handbook* (1973): Charles Curran, 'The First Fifty Years', pp. 9–10.

22 John C. W. Reith, *Into the Wind*, p. 130, 'I told him he was one of the greatest men of all time'.

23 This reference to 'the consensus' is obscure. As Dr Aurel Kolnai has shown, a distinction must be drawn between consensus as 'a haphazard empirical coincidence of individual insights' and as 'crystallised in moral codes and traditions and expressed in consultations, admonitions and other forms of moral discourse.' 'Moral Consensus' in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society 1969–70*, pp. 98–9. Both Reith and Curran write of 'reflecting'. Reith would reflect 'the spirit of common sense Christian ethics', Curran 'the order in which society as a whole (often described as the consensus) clarifies those values'. Reith, I think, means by 'reflect' merely 'select and judge in accordance with'. Curran might mean this, but the surrounding ideas of 'giving a clear picture' and of *not* setting up as 'the nation's guide in matters of taste and morals' suggest something much more passive. The suggestion is that the BBC varies its moral outlook in accordance with shifts in popular morality.

24 pp. 176–7.

25 Quoted by Asa Briggs, *History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom. I. The Birth of Broadcasting* (London, 1961), p. 340.

26 Quoted in *BBC Handbook* (1973), pp. 176.

27 Quoted in *BBC Handbook* (1973), pp. 175–6.

28 John C. W. Reith, *Into the Wind* (London, 1949), p. 135.

29 Quoted in *BBC Handbook* (1973), p. 176.

30 Enid Welsford, *The Fool: his Social and Literary History* (London, 1933). The references are to p. 267, pp. 126–7, and to the *Dictionary of National Biography* article on 'Archibald Armstrong'.

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